

Approved For Release 2001/09/01 : CIA-RDP79-00798A000700060018-6



UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701

September 27, 1973

Mr. Jack Perry
Council on Environmental Quality
722 Jackson Place, N.W.
Washington, D. C. 20006

Dear Jack:

I am most grateful for your kind letter of 18 September. I can assure you that everyone associated with the Soviet participants in this summer's joint enterprise - scientists, ship's crew, Alaskan hosts, etc. - has a very good impression of the usefulness of that exchange and of the promise of its future growth. We carried it all off well, often through no virtue in our planning, but rather by sheer dumb luck!

It is imperative for us to plan carefully for future exchanges, which will hopefully include working visits of American scientists to laboratories and field stations in the Soviet Union. Of special significance to the future success of the program will be the directing of attention to matters of funding and scientific quality.

Aside from my interests in the biology and physiology of marine mammals, I am very much concerned about the availability of suitable ice-worthy research ships to serve as laboratory platforms in arctic waters - where much of the interest in marine mammals is centered. The capability of the Soviet Union for this kind of work in ice-covered seas far exceeds that of any other nation. In fact our own performance in ice-strengthened research shipping is very poor compared to most other countries which have polar interests. I am actively involved in the planning for (and finding the funds to build) a new arctic ship suitable for biological and oceanographic research. This is a topic about which we could learn much from the Soviet Union. I don't know how to approach them on the subject, and I would welcome your thoughts about it. Meanwhile, I am writing to Jack Tech about the matter. I would be enthusiastic about spending an extended period of time in the USSR studying both marine mammal biology and ice shipping technology.

I look forward very much to the December meeting. I would particularly like to talk with you and Lee Talbot about the program. I am diligently studying Russian!

Cordially,

Robert Elsner

RE/ak

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Copy to: L. Talbot

PLEASE REPLY BY AIRMAIL

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99701

September 26, 1973

Dr. Robert V. Miller
National Marine Fisheries Service
Room 420, Page Building
3300 Whitehaven Street NW
Washington, D. C. 20007

Dear Bob:

I wondered what brought about the change in plans. You requested me to meet with Bud Fay, Carlton Ray and John Burns and draw up a list of proposals for collaborative studies with Soviet Scientists. Then you were to get this list from me by telephone Tuesday, September 25th. When we finally talked today apparently the cable had been sent to Moscow without our prepared list. We must work for better cooperation than that amongst ourselves or surely we will be in tough shape when we encounter our Soviet counterparts!

Our list follows:

1. Further investigations of systematics and distribution of North Pacific harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*).
2. Studies of tropho-energetics and functional morphology of marine mammals.
3. Comparative ecology and productivity of Bering - Chukchi Sea ice inhabiting pinnipeds.
4. Radio tracking and aerial remote sensing of walrus and bowhead whale.
5. Influence of weather and ice dynamics on marine mammal distribution.
6. Residual toxicants and their metabolism in marine mammals.

It is our judgement that this list of topics should be communicated to the Soviet delegation at the earliest possible date in order that these specific proposals may be on the official agenda for the December meeting. Otherwise we run the risk of the Soviet delegation arriving unprepared and unwilling to discuss specific projects which would otherwise become part of a productive exchange program. For example, I suspect that a functional morphologist (such as Anatoly Sokolov, Zoological Institute, Academy of Sciences, Leningrad) might not be included in their delegation if they did not know we were expecting to discuss that topic. You will recall that he was planning to participate with us.

In my judgement and that of my colleagues we badly need some mechanism for discussion and resolution of our own problems separate from and preferably prior to the Soviet - U.S. meeting in December. The questions which especially need attention are 1) provision of incidental budget items (like the couple night's hotel bills in New York, telephone calls, etc.) and 2) review of project proposals for scientific quality 3) publicity and 4) relationship of the U.S. - USSR Environmental Program to federal agencies such as the National Academy of Sciences and National Science Foundation (which paid most of the bills for this summer's program).

Please keep us informed of what actions are being taken on these and related matters. The success or failure of the exchange program will depend in large part on our ability to obtain positive assurance that we are communicating understandably with one another about the fundamentals. You know of my sincere commitment to the successful implementation and strengthening of the foundations for international science we laid in Moscow. Please don't hesitate to call on any of us for whatever assistance you might need.

Cordially,



Robert Elsner
Professor

RE/ak

Copies to: J. Perry
F. Fay
C. Ray
J. Burns